

Finding Aid of the Marcus Donald Bracey Photograph Collection, circa 1916-1919 PhC.193

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Summary Information

Repository	State Archives of North Carolina
Title	Marcus Donald Bracey Photograph Collection,
Date	circa 1916-1919
Extent	0.3 linear feet (84 items)
Language	English

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], PhC.193, Marcus Donald Bracey Photograph Collection, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, NC, USA.

Biographical/Historical note

The photographs in the Marcus Donald Bracey collection depict part of the Yadkin Falls Development project on the Yadkin river from 1915-1919 which included the construction of two dams; Narrows dam, and further downstream, Falls dam. The industrialization of this section of the river started in 1898 with the prospect of hydroelectric power. An English mining expert named Egbert Barry Cornwall Hambly was the first to see the area's potential for hydroelectric power noting how, for two miles, the Yadkin River continually narrows causing currents to build speed. Additional sources of electric power were needed for growing industry along the Yadkin River. Eventually, Hambly was successful in recruiting Northern capitalists to invest in his new venture of developing power at Yadkin Falls. Shortly thereafter, Hambly organized the North Carolina Power Company. In 1899, a Pittsburgh financier by the name of George I. Whitney, purchased controlling interest in the North Carolina Power Company which then became Whitney Development Company with Hambly at the helm of general operations for North Carolina. Whitney's plans for a hydroelectric dam on the Yadkin River were the crux of his development plans--which included several mines in the area. Over the next decade Whitney Development Company experienced many setbacks and several tragedies, including an outbreak of typhoid that claimed Hambly, and three mine closures. The continued hardships forced Whitney to sell coal stocks and eventually in 1910 the company declared bankruptcy. In 1912, Southern Aluminum Company purchased the property with plans to generate power for an aluminum smelting plant. Southern Aluminum Company was a subsidiary of the French Company, L'Aluminium Francaise. The company started work on the project in 1913, but chose a different site two miles south for their dam. The half-finished Whitney dam was abandoned. By the next year many of the company's key employees had been called back to France at the start of World War I, and as a result of financial hindrances created by the war, Southern Aluminum Company was forced to sell to Alcoa. Alcoa resumed work on the project, but experienced several setbacks including a record breaking weather event in 1916 that produced 22 inches of rain within 24 hours. The resulting flood severely damaged the site of Alcoa's Narrows dam project. Work continued after the flood and just a few months after the dam was completed on 17 June 1917, it began producing power.

Work began on Falls dam shortly after work was completed on Narrows. The Falls development is located on the border of Stanly and Montgomery counties and was completed in 1919. Considerably smaller than the Narrows project, it acts as a supplemental unit and contains a dam, a gate controlled spillway, reservoir and powerhouse. The neighboring town of Badin was named after Adrien Badin, president of L'Aluminium Français. Badin's roots as a pre-planned company town show in its French influenced architecture and general European style layout featuring curvilinear streets and rock-walled open storm drains. These unique characteristics separate Badin from the typical company or mill town seen in the piedmont region of North Carolina.

Collection Overview

This collection contains eighty-two (82) gelatin silver photographs and two small log books. The photographs range in size from 1"x1.5" to 8"x10" with the bulk of the collection measuring 3.5"x4.5". The photographs depict scenes from the Yadkin Falls Development project on the Yadkin River in Stanly and Montgomery county, North Carolina from 1915-1919. It is believed that these photographs were created by an employee of either the builder of the dam, Hardaway Construction Company, or Alcoa. The photographs are shot in a documentary style with focus on work progress, equipment, site characteristics, and damage caused by natural disaster. Subject matter mainly includes construction scenes depicting work on the Falls Dam and the Narrows dam, the first two of the four dams built in the area. The aftermath of the 1916 Flood is represented in seven 3.5"x4.5" photographs depicting the damage caused to the Narrows Dam construction site. Also included are photographs depicting a train derailment, landscape photographs depicting the area around the site, photographs depicting the aluminum smelting plant, and several exterior photographs of the living quarters of workers. The two small log books, measuring 4"x6.5", were used by Marcus Donald Bracey of the Hardaway Construction Company during the construction of the Falls Dam. The books, bearing Bracey's name, display a daily record of statistics regarding output and general conditions at the on-site concrete plant referred to as "the crusher plant".

Organization of the Collection

This collection is organized into series:

- Series 1. Dam Sites
 - Series 2. People/Offsite
 - Series 3. Flood of 1916
 - Series 4. Narrows Powerhouse Interior
 - Series 5. Train Derailment
 - Series 6. Bracey Log Books
-

Administrative Information

Publication Information

State Archives of North Carolina

Access to Collection

Available for research.

Copyright Notice

Copyright is retained by the authors of these materials, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law (Title 17 US Code). Individual researchers are responsible for using these materials in conformance with copyright law as well as any donor restrictions accompanying the materials.

Acquisitions Information

The Marcus Donald Bracey Photograph Collection was donated by the nephew of Marcus Donald Bracey, D. Graham Walters, Jr., on 9 September 2013 and accessioned by the State Archives on 26 September 2013. The photographs were originally contained in two scrapbooks with pages made from black construction paper. Upon accession, the photographs were professionally removed from the pages. No written information was found inside the scrapbooks to aid in identification. Scrapbooks were discarded.

Processing Information note

Processed by archives staff, 2013-2014; finding Aid by Ian Dunn; finding Aid encoded by Aaron Cusick, September 2014

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Hardaway Construction Company.

Geographic Name(s)

- Albemarle (N.C.)
- Badin (N.C.)
- Badin Lake (N.C.)
- Hardaway Site (N.C.)
- Montgomery County (N.C.)
- Morrow Mountain State Park (N.C.)
- North Carolina
- North Carolina--Piedmont section
- Stanly County (N.C.)
- Troy (N.C.)
- Uwharrie National Forest (N.C.)

- Yadkin River (N.C.)

Subject(s)

- Aluminum
- Aluminum plants
- Building
- Dams--North Carolina.
- Industrialization
- Industries
- Water power
- World War, 1914-1918

Bibliography

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Badin Multiple Resource Nomination, Statement of Significance. National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1974), 5-6

Dam Sites

Collection Inventory

Series 1. Dam Sites

PhC.193.1.01 Image of Narrows dam construction showing railroad tracks and spillway piers being constructed in the background, no date, estimated 1915-1916 original black and white print; dimensions: 6"x8"

PhC.193.1.02 Image of Narrows Dam Concrete or "Crusher Plant" looking downstream. All concrete used for dam construction was produced in this structure. no date, estimated 1915-1916 original black and white print; dimensions: 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.03 Image of Hole for foundation of Narrows's powerhouse. Forms for concrete foundations can be seen along with railroad tracks in background. Back is inscribed, "Foundation hole of powerhouse on new job". no date, estimated 1915 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.04 Image of Narrows dam seen in background with construction rubble in foreground. Possibly future location of powerhouse. no date, estimated 1915 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.05 Image of African American male worker standing on a train car used for hauling concrete to dam site. Image taken at crusher plant. no date, estimated 1915 original Black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.06 Image of Narrows construction site taken from high vantage point. Forms for water discharge ports can be seen along with various other forms surrounded by a railroad track. no date, estimated 1915 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.07 Image of African American male worker wearing a hat, sitting on railing outside crusher plant at Narrows site. no date, estimated 1915-1916 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.08 Image of train trestle can be seen at the Narrows site looking downstream. Picture taken before flood, as this bridge was destroyed during that event. no date, estimated 1915-1916 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

Dam Sites

PhC.193.1.09 Image of African American male wearing a hat. Worker is bending over footings for powerhouse, smoothing concrete with a trowel. no date, estimated 1915-1916 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.10 Image of completed, or mostly completed Narrows dam. Trestle, powerhouse and dam can all be seen along with temporary trestle for construction. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.11 Image of powerhouse seen from atop Narrows dam. Shows cranes/equipment in foreground. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.12 Image of the exterior of a bypass tunnel at Narrows dam. Water is seen coming out slowly. no date, estimated 1915-1916 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.13 Image of Narrows dam, powerhouse and bridge with turbulent waters. Likely taken just after completion from construction railroad trestle. no date, estimated 1917 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.14 Post card depicting Narrows dam nearing completion. Writing on back of postcard is illegible due to glue used to bind to scrapbook. no date, estimated 1917 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.15 Image of turbine water discharge port at Narrows dam. The forms look to have just been removed with forms above ports still in place. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.16 Image of crusher/concrete plant at narrows. Tall, temporary wooden structure with cranes and other equipment surrounding it. two copies no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.17 Image (close up) of concrete pouring out of a mixer at the crusher plant. The concrete is falling into a rail-car to be transported to the dam. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.18 Image of concrete spillway piers at Narrows dam. A small amount of water can be seen traveling down spillway. Likely taken shortly after completion. no date, estimated 1917 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

Dam Sites

PhC.193.1.19 Corner of powerhouse is in foreground with very turbulent water spilling down the face of the dam and crashing into foundation of powerhouse. no date, estimated 1917 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.20 Image of Narrows dam site taken from high vantage point. Forms for turbine water discharge ports can be seen. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.21 Image of primitive steam powered shovel/excavator (close view) at Narrows site. Railroad seen in background. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.22 Image of rail car trestle leading up to a concrete form at Narrows site. One man standing on top of car and one standing below. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.23 Image of Falls dam construction site. Piers are seen in later stages of construction along with cranes and other equipment in water. no date, estimated 1918-1919 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.24 Image of Falls dam construction site. Piers are seen in later stages of construction. Forms surround tops of piers. Railroad and shacks around site are visible. no date, estimated 1918-1919 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.25 Image of Falls dam site with rough water running through. Close view of crane and footings for powerhouse. no date, estimated 1918-1919 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.26 Image from high vantage point of Falls dam site. Machinery, cranes and spillway piers are all in view. no date, estimated 1918-1919 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.27 Image of Falls dam site. Cranes and concrete piers are seen along with the foundation of powerhouse. no date, estimated 1918-1919 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.28 Image of footbridge across Yadkin for workers. Water level is very high as one end of the bridge is under water. no date, estimated 1918-1919 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.29 Image of shore line of Yadkin. Taken from across river. Exact location unknown. Possibly Falls dam site. no date, estimated 1915-1919 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.30 Image of footbridge across Yadkin river for workers. Water level is normal. Photograph is inscribed on the back, "Footbridge across river at new job." no date, estimated 1918-1919 original black and white print, 3.5"x5.5"

People/Offsite

PhC.193.1.31 Image of Falls dam spillway piers. Early stages of construction with piers half completed. Back of photograph is inscribed, "View of peirs ____ side of river." no date, estimated 1918-1919 original black and white print, 2.5"x4"

PhC.193.1.32 Image of Falls site before construction began. A shack and a steam engine with cars in tow is seen from across the river. Back inscribed, "View of river just above new job" no date, estimated 1917-1918 original black and white print 2.5"x3"

PhC.193.1.33 Image of landscape surrounding the Yadkin river with Falls dam in background and unknown bridge upstream of construction site. no date, estimated 1918-1919 original black and white print 2.5"x3.5"

PhC.193.1.34 Image of Yadkin River with unknown bridge in background. Most likely taken from Falls dam construction site. no date, estimated 1918-1919 original black and white print 2.5"x3.5"

PhC.193.1.35 Image of Yadkin River looking downstream at Falls dam construction site. Construction on piers has just begun. no date, estimated 1917-1918 original black and white print 2.5"x3.5"

PhC.193.1.36 Image of Yadkin River looking downstream at Falls dam construction site. Very early in project. Footbridge and railway are seen upstream of bridge. no date, estimated 1917 original black and white print 2.5"x3.5"

PhC.193.1.37 Image of Whitney Dam. Dam is damaged, most likely from flood. Cross-section is seen of stone dam. no date, estimated 1915-1919 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.38 Image of Whitney dam with water spilling over top in background. Foreground appears to have a breach caused by flood. no date, estimated 1915-1919 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.1.39 Image of concrete/crusher plant at site of Narrows dam. The plant is still being constructed in the image. no date, estimated 1916-1917 publication clipping, black and white, half tone 1.5"x2.5"

PhC.193.1.40 Image of a bypass tunnel with rail cars inside. Lights can be seen on the inside of the tunnel. no date, estimated 1916-1917 publication clipping, black and white, half tone 1.5"x2.5"

Series 2. People/Offsite

People/Offsite

PhC.193.2.01 Image of Yadkin river from atop a mountain, trees partially obscuring view. Possibly Palmer Mountain. no Date, estimated 1915-1919 original black and white print 2.5"x3.5"

PhC.193.2.02 Image of large house in East Badin, NC. Rear and side are seen. Most likely a quadruplex built by the French for white workers. no date, estimated 1915-1919 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.03 Image of a roughly constructed shack with three people standing on steps to front door. One white and two African American. no date, estimated 1915-1919 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.04 Image of small building with man standing in doorway. Lumber or building materials are strewn about around the exterior of the house. no date, estimated 1915-1919 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.05 Image of aluminum smelting plant. Seen from the north. Photo shows large industrial buildings, smoke stacks, and one water tower. no date, estimated 1916-1919 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.06 Image of aluminum smelting plant. North view from Nantahala street. Photo shows large industrial buildings near large electrical towers. no date, estimated 1917-1919 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.07 Image of aluminum smelting plant. Seen from a distance (possibly half of a mile) on or across from Badin lake. no Date, estimated 1917-1919 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.08 View of a section of the Yadkin river. Present day Badin lake. People are seen below on the waters edge. no date, estimated 1915-1916 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.09 Image of the rear of a simple cabin. Back inscribed, "View from back of houses, nearest house dining room ____ room and kitchens. Snow is covering ground. no date, estimated 1915-1919 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.10 Image of a railroad trestle (unidentified) across a body of water, probably Yadkin river. Trestle has concrete piers and a steel truss bridge. no date, estimated 1915-1919 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

Flood of 1916

PhC.193.2.11 Image of Yadkin river most likely taken from foot bridge near Falls dam site. Wires from bridge can be seen in frame. no date, estimated 1915-1919 original black and white print 3.5x5.5

PhC.193.2.12 Image of the Hardaway Construction Company scrapyard for Falls dam construction. Concrete mixers and various equipment and scrap metal can be seen. 9 May 1918 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.13 Image of the Hardaway Construction Company scrapyard for Falls dam construction. Various machinery and scrap metal can be seen. 10 May 1918 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.14 Image of three men standing over a railroad at Hardaway scrapyard. The men are dressed nicely with hats. Scrap metal and machinery can be seen in background. 9 May 1918 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.15 Image of the Hardaway Construction Company scrap yard for Falls dam construction. Various machinery and scrap metal can be seen along with one out building in the background. no date, estimated 1918 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.16 Image of the Hardaway Construction Company scrap yard for Falls dam construction. Various machinery and scrap metal can be seen along with one out building in the background. no date, estimated 1918 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.17 Image of the Hardaway Construction Company scrap yard for Falls dam construction. Various machinery and scrap metal can be seen along with many workers in the background. no date, estimated 1918 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.18 Image of the Hardaway Construction Company scrap yard for Falls dam construction. Various machinery and scrap metal can be seen along with a steam locomotive and rail tracks. no date, estimated 1918 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.2.19 Image of the Hardaway Construction Company scrap yard for Falls dam construction. A steam powered crane lifts scrap metal below a railway while man holds on. no date, estimated 1918 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

Series 3. Flood of 1916

PhC.193.3.01 Image of the base of a crane at Narrows dam. Flood waters can be seen washing away the base of another crane. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

Narrows Powerhouse Interior

PhC.193.3.02 Image of the Yadkin River at Narrows dam site. Flood waters can be seen washing away equipment/damaging site. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.3.03 Flood waters can be seen rushing through Narrows dam site. Original bridge is pictured (damaged) with dam site upstream. Footings for powerhouse can be seen. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.3.04 Flood waters can be seen rushing through Narrows dam site. Rail tracks can be seen broken, equipment in water and dam is damaged. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.3.05 Flood waters can be seen rushing through Narrows dam site. Dam is damaged, equipment in water. Spillway piers are seen in background. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.3.06 Flood waters can be seen rushing through Narrows dam site. A crane is pictured in the river standing up to flood waters. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.3.07 Flood waters are seen around Narrows dam site. Rail tracks are seen surrounded by water. Foundation of power house is seen on bottom right. no date, estimated 1916 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

Series 4. Narrows Powerhouse Interior

PhC.193.4.01 Close view of mechanicals related to electrical generator in Narrows Powerhouse. Large mass of pipes and valves along with several large gauges can be seen. no date, estimated 1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.4.02 Image of generator (?) and various mechanicals in Narrows dam powerhouse. A worker is seen in the background kneeling. no date, estimated 1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.4.03 Image of the interior of the Narrows dam powerhouse. Three large electrical generators/turbines can be seen along with other various forms of equipment. no date, estimated 1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.4.05 Image of the interior of the Narrows dam powerhouse. Three large electrical generators/turbines can be seen along with other various forms of equipment. no date, estimated 1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

Train Derailment

PhC.193.4.06 Close view of the rear of one turbine/generator in the Narrows dam powerhouse. Electrical equipment along with pipes and valves can be seen. no date, estimated 1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.4.07 Close view of large switch board inside Narrows dam powerhouse. Switch board lies under loft behind large turbines/generators. no date, estimated 1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.4.08 Image of a glass measuring device under some sort of valved outlet. Possibly to test quality of water. Location seems to be Narrows dam powerhouse. no date, estimated 1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

Series 5. Train Derailment

PhC.193.5.01 Image of men and women surrounding an overturned freight car. Men are dressed nicely, women are wearing hats. no date, estimated 1916-1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.5.02 Image of men surrounding an overturned freight car. Wreckage can be seen along with rail tracks and one man on top of wreckage. no date, estimated 1916-1917 original black and white print 3.5"x 5.5"

PhC.193.5.03 Detailed image of overturned locomotive engine. Mangled tracks and rail ties can be seen under the wreckage. Two men look on in upper left corner. no date, estimated 1916-1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.5.04 Landscape shot of overturned locomotive engine. The length of the engine is shown with men, women and children on and around the crash. no date, estimated 1916-1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.5.05 Image of overturned locomotive engine. Looking down tracks with house in background. The length of the engine is shown with men, women and children on and around the crash. no date, estimated 1916-1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.5.06 Close image of the wheels of overturned locomotive engine. Man can be seen climbing on top of the wreckage in the background. no date, estimated 1916-1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

Bracey Log Books

PhC.193.5.07 Image of several passenger cars that have derailed. Passengers (men, women and children) are seen gathering outside of the cars. no date, estimated 1916-1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

PhC.193.5.08 Image of several passenger cars that have derailed. Passengers (men, women and children) are seen gathering outside of the cars. no date, estimated 1916-1917 original black and white print 3.5"x5.5"

Series 6. Bracey Log Books

PhC.193.6.01 Leather bound surveyors "level book". This book was used by Bracey to record daily statistics at the Falls dam concrete/crusher plant. Information recorded includes: date, time, ambient temperature, number of train engine used to transport concrete, number of bags of concrete used, type of concrete, etc. 11 December 1917 to 23 March 1918 small leather bound book 4"x6.5"

PhC.193.6.01 Leather bound surveyors "level book". This book was used by Bracey to record daily statistics at the Falls dam construction site. The information seems to be related to the construction of the spillway piers. Information recorded includes: date, time, pier number, elevation, time started, time finished, job foreman, and number of trains. 7 August 1918 to 30 September 1918 small leather bound book 4"x6.5"